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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I feel that the proposed settlement does not provide enough regulations, rules, and other needed stipulations against Microsoft in order for the consumers of America to fully benefit.

Because Microsoft has a monopoly on operating systems, and maintains that monopoly through distribution of their own software with their operating systems, no other operating system can successfully enter into the consumer market. The consumers do not have a choice, and this is not in the best interest for American consumers. Instead, they are required to use one and only one operating system, and another of potential better quality is disregarded before even given its chance. Furthermore, Microsoft has a monopoly on many of its software products. It obtained these monopolies mainly through selling the software along with the operating system. If a consumer buys the operating system, they must buy the software with it. In addition to this, the software cannot run on any other operating system. Likewise, Microsoft will not release all of the technical specifications necessary to allow other software companies to create products of similar quality. If these other software companies do create software which competes with Microsoft's software, Microsoft has shown a history of giving their products away with their operating system. Then, consumers will not purchase the rival company's software, because Microsoft has used its operating system monopoly to choose the software for them. Of course, that "free" software is not truly free: somehow the cost must be justified, and the prices of other Microsoft products and operating systems will rise to cover the costs.

Let's imagine that company A makes screwdrivers. That same company A makes screws. By a turn of events, the company becomes the dominant provider of screwdrivers, although many other companies still make screws. Also, the screwdrivers which company A sells are often questioned for their poor quality at performing their job and inability to resist breaking under pressure. Now, in this situation, if another rival company, company B, made a better screwdriver and sold it at a reasonable price, they would soon easily compete with company A. This is because consumers have a choice, and can choose which screwdriver to purchase. But, before company B comes to the market with the better screwdriver, company A decides that it will manufacture screws which can only be used with company A's screwdrivers. In addition, they give away these new screws with their screwdrivers. Since they have the monopoly on screwdrivers, this effectively hurts the other screw manufacturers' businesses. Soon, the only company making screwdrivers and screws is company A. Also, since they will not release the specifications for their products, no other company can create the same type of screwdriver which uses company A's screws. Similarly, no consumer would purchase screws from another company because they are already "given" screws

from company A. Consumers do have the choice to buy screws from another company, but these other companies are already at a disadvantage, because they compete with a product that is free and "readily available" to any consumer which purchased a screwdriver from company A.

The remedy for this problem is to somehow force Microsoft to not distribute any software with its operating systems. Then consumers would have the true choice over which software products to buy. Also, the second part of the solution is to force Microsoft to release all of the needed technical specifications so that other companies can create operating systems capable of running Microsoft's software. This would also allow other companies to create software which effortlessly runs on Microsoft's own operating systems.

Breaking the company into two companies (one for the operating systems, and one for the software) would be an effective method of forcing the above requirements. But this might not be needed if the above requirements could be maintained by some type of watchful technical committee.

The most important issue is choice for the consumer. Once every company has access to the needed technological information, then true choice can be given to the consumers of America. If one company creates a superior technology, and keeps it secret in order to make a profit, then more power to them. But once a company uses that advantage to force their products to be purchased over other companies' products, then the consumer is no longer able to choose, and the proper steps should be taken to rectify the situation.

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